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# *A Quill from a Wild Goose Canada*

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With the Cree Legend of the Wild  
Goose, here set forth for the first  
time in print

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Given at the office of the Manitoba  
Free Press, Winnipeg,  
Canada

Christmas, nineteen  
hundred and four





THE MANITOBA FREE  
PRESS has marked the  
Xmas season in previous  
years by the presentation:

IN 1901—Of a miniature sack of "No  
1 Hard" Manitoba Wheat.

IN 1902—Of a miniature sack of  
Reindeer Pemmican made at  
Fort McPherson, a Hudson's  
Bay Co. post, sixty-five miles  
within the Arctic Circle, and  
2,975 miles northwest of Winni-  
peg, accompanied by an illus-  
trated booklet, bound with a  
deerskin thong.

IN 1903—Of a Gopher's Tail, mounted  
as a "good luck bringer,"  
accompanied by an illustrated  
booklet containing the Cree  
legend of the gopher, given  
in print for the first time.

# A QUILL FROM A CANADA WILD GOOSE

WITH THE CREE LEGEND OF NIH-KA,  
THE WILD GOOSE, SET FORTH  
FOR THE FIRST TIME  
IN PRINT



Oh ! Nature's noblest gift—my gray goose quill !  
Slave of my thoughts, obedient to my will,  
Torn from thy parent bird to form a pen,  
That mighty instrument of little men !

*Bryon—English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*

WINNIPEG  
CHRISTMAS, 1904

From the Presses of  
The Manitoba Free Press Printing Department  
Winnipeg, Canada

# Of Grey Goose Quills



THE quill pen accompanying this little book, which The Manitoba Free Press, of Winnipeg, sends you with its best wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, was made in England from a wing-feather of a Canada wild goose taken, last spring with many others in the vicinity of York Factory, the historic trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company, some six hundred miles—as the wild goose flies—due north from Winnipeg on the shore of Hudson Bay.

The particular wild goose that furnished the pen herewith probably had its birthplace somewhere on the banks of one of the many rivers emptying into Hudson's Bay, along the west coast line of that great inland sea. On the spring and fall journeys of the drilled battalion of which it was a member, in its migrations from Arctic meadows to the lagoons of the South, it traversed yearly a great extent of this continent, its



far-off " honk " falling faintly from on -high, as it cleaved the upper regions of the air on powerful wings. The Red River of the North—at the junction of which with the Assiniboine stands Winnipeg—is, like the Mississippi and the Nile, a main line of bird travel north and south, and we may well believe that our wild goose and its mates followed the course of that waterway in those yearly journeyings, which, for this special goose and for others, ended, as they began, in the north. After that, the wing-feather which has been fashioned to a pen for your use crossed the Atlantic twice, and is now at your service.



Quill pens made from the wing-feathers of the Canada wild goose, and known as Hudson's Bay quills, are still used at Court in England, and in some of the British Government offices, as well as in most of the West End clubs in London, and in the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge. King Edward habitually uses them; it was with a Hudson's Bay quill he signed the Coronation Oath. Mr. Balfour also uses them habitually. A long list might be given of distinguished persons who wrote with Hudson's Bay quills, including Sir Walter Scott, who wrote an entire novel, "Redgauntlet," with one Hudson's Bay quill; Lord Palmerston, Charles Dickens, Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Gladstone and Queen Victoria.

It is only the five outer wing-feathers of the wild goose that are useful for writing; and of these the second and third are the best. The left wing quills are more generally esteemed than those from the right wing, from the fact that they curve outward and



away from the writer using them. In reply to an inquiry which was sent by The Manitoba Free Press in regard to the process of making the feathers into pens, the following, which has been received from London, is of interest:

" All the quills that are sufficiently large for pen-making purposes receive the same treatment. After being roughly sorted for size, they are treated by the 'dutcher,' who 'fires' them in a small charcoal stove. This operation consists in passing the end of the quill slowly into the stove and out again. One effect of the firing is to clear away the cloudy appearance on the barrel of the quill. After the first firing, the quill is laid on a board and flattened with a knife; after which it is again fired. The second firing restores the quill to its original shape again, although the finished pen shows signs of the knifing in the ridges which appear at the sides of the pen, which can usually be distinguished.

" After firing, the quill passes to the rubber, and the bearder and stripper, who scrape the barrel and remove a part of the feather and trim it. It then reaches the pen cutter, who first forces a small object like a pen holder into the open end of the quill, which causes it to split. The pen is then cut round the split with a very sharp knife. It is necessary that the quill should be split, and not cut, in order that it may retain its elasticity. A cut would remain open permanently.

" The pens are finally sorted and bound into bundles with colored cord which denotes the quality, and



the ends are protected by a cardboard case; and in this condition they pass into the trade."

It is interesting to note that the English word pen (Latin, *penna*), as well as its equivalent in French (*plume*) and in German (*feder*) originally means a wing-feather; but in ancient times the implements used for producing written characters were not quills. Among the earliest reference to pens are those found in Judges v. 14, Psalms xlv. 1, and Isaiah viii. 1, chiefly referring beyond doubt to the iron stylus which cut out characters in the tablets of limestone or soapstone. These may have been made of other metals, and were in some instances pointed with diamonds, as referred to in Jeremiah viii, 8; and if taken in connection with the mention of a penknife (Jeremiah, xxxvi. 23) this passage seems to imply that a reed was in use at that period.

In the Third Epistle of John, written about A.D. 85, mention is made of "ink and pen," referring to the practice of writing upon skins or other flexible material. Although the first reference in the Bible to writing belongs to B.C. 1296, writing upon goatskins has been found in the course of excavations in Upper Egypt, and is assigned to the reign of King Khufu, B.C. 3766. In the far East, and perhaps in Egypt the camel's hair pencil was substituted for metal implements, and characters were painted on the bark of trees and skins of animals, very much as the Chinese draw them on paper.

The quills of geese and crows were in time discovered to be more useful than either the reed or



brush... They were introduced, it is thought, about A.D. 56. For centuries the quill was the favorite instrument of the rapid writer, and continued to be so until the steel pen superseded it. Until the early years of the nineteenth century, the quills were simply hardened by dipping in boiling alum water or diluted nitric acid, and were not cut. Writers cut their own pens from these prepared quills, an art acquired only after much instruction and practice. Every teacher was expected to be proficient in this part of his profession. Early in the nineteenth century quill pens were made for sale, and boxes of them, with nibs for fastening them upon holders, were sold by all stationers.

Notwithstanding the impression that the quill pen produces only coarse writing, as beautiful specimens of penmanship have been produced by it as by any other instrument in use, not excepting the engraver's tool. It has always been from the goose that quills have been chiefly obtained; although the swan, crow, owl, hawk and turkey have all been more or less laid under contribution. Swan quills, indeed, are better (and more costly) than those from the goose. For fine lines, crow quills have been much employed.

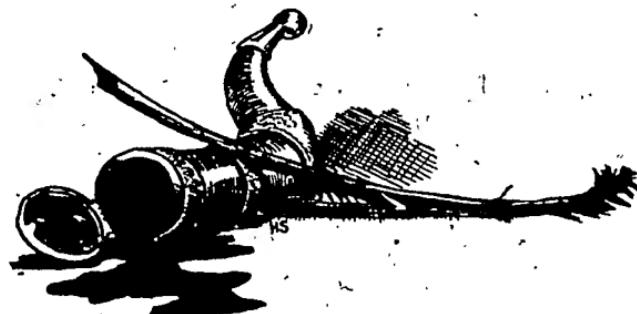
You will hardly tell by what you see that I write with a steel pen. It is a device come out of France, of which the original was very good and wrote very well, but this is but a copy ill made.

—Roger North to his sister, Mrs. Foley, March 8, 1700

In 1779, however, we have mention of a certain Charles Stewart, a pen-maker, a man of no fixed habitation. It would seem, therefore, that pen-makers wandered about the country selling their wares, turning goose quills into pens, and making anew those that had been worn out.

—Notes and Queries, vii, 5, 220

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# The Cree Legend of Nih-Ka, the Wild Goose



IT is many years since I heard the story of the Gray Goose. It was told me by Kitche Keesickow, a Swampy Cree Indian, who had been brought up at the Roman Catholic Mission at Fort Alexander, on Lake Winnipeg. We were camped at Rabbit-Point, beyond the narrows, in the late fall, being storm-stayed by a strong North wind, which, with its hundred miles of hoarded strength, raised the lake to such a pitch that it was more than the frail birch bark could withstand. After the slender poles and brush had been raised for the shelter, and the fragrant bed of cedar spread before the fire of driftwood, we sat listening to the "Honk ker-Honk!" of the geese, as they mounted high in the air at sight of our fire, on their journey south. As I heard the story so I have tried to set it down, and if I have wandered from the thread of the tale, or erred in any of the details of it, you will be lenient to remember that in those days none ever



dreamt such stories could be sought after or thought worthy to be in print, and that the Company's affairs, and the gathering of skins and exaction of hunters' debt, was of more consequence to us in the service of the Honorable Company than a thousand of their fables.

"I t'ink you not hear," said Kitche Keesikcow, "of how dat Nih-ka, de gray goose, becom' dat color, an' not w'ite lak' de wavey, w'at you call arcteek goose." It is not long story, mon frere, but it is tol' many year, more as I can co'nt, over de fire of de Cree, all a way from de Big Watter of de Companee to de contry of de Ar'abasca.

"It is long, long year back w'en dere is yet only wan man in de worl', de fader of all de Cree, Wi-sa-ka-chack, who mak' de tree', de bird', an' de animal' for his chil'ren. Dere is also a ver' bad speerit, nam' Ke-che-mosh-ka-hun, a beeg medicine, mak' great magic, who not lak' dat Wi-sa-ka-chack com' on his hunting ground, wat you call trespass. He t'ought dat by'meby quick Wi-sa-ka-chack cover de w'ole c'ontree wit' his chil'ren an' his animal', an' his oder t'ing dat he mek', an' leave no place quiet for heem. So he fill hees heart wit' gre't hatred for Wi-sa-ka-chack, an' do everyt'ing he could to mek' bad t'ing for him, an' treat him de wors' he can.

"It happen wan fall dat We-Kwas, de birch, she w'isper to her leaves a message for Wi-sa-ka-chack, an' send dem on de back of de nort' wind to heem; for We-Kwas she know dat Ke-che-mosh-ka-hun was Wi-sa-ka-chack' enemy, an' had evil t'ought.



" De nort' wind he blów, an' de leaves dey rustle  
an' fall roun' Wi-sa-ka-chack an' dey w'isper dat  
message—'Oh, broder, com' in de spring to We-Kwas,  
an' she geev you her bark, an' mek' mighty medicine  
for protec' you from' Ke-che-mosh-ka-hun, your  
enemy.'

" Den Wi-sa-ka-chack he go hunt all de winter,  
an' w'en de spring she mos' com', he com' out de  
edge of de wood, an' he fin' de sun hot on hees face;  
an' he look down, an' he see some of de leaves of  
We-Kwas, w'at bring de message. And de wes- wind  
she blow warm in hees' face, an' de leaves dey rustle,  
an' dey say—'Oh, broder, you 'member quick de word  
of We-Kwas, de birch, w'ich we bring you, for  
Ke-che-mosh-ka-hun he has de evil t'ought, an' he lay  
for to keel you.'

" Den Wi-sa-ka-chack he 'member dat We-Kwas,  
an' w'at she say, an' he go quick an' put on hees  
snowshoe', an' tek' his bow an' arrows to defen' him  
from Ke-che-mosh-ka-hun, an' he set out on de trail  
for go to We-Kwas' tepee.

" But Ke-che-mosh-ka-hun he hide himself onder  
de snow, an' he hear all dat, an' he go right away an'  
mak' beeg magic; an' in mos' a minute de valley she  
fill wit' water, so Wi-sa-ka-chack near drown. An',  
just as Wi-sa-ka-chack he com' up de las' tam, Ke-  
no-o-zhay, de jack-fresh, she swim up out of de river,  
an' say—'Little broder, get on my back an' I save you;  
an' she swim to de shore wit' Wi-sa-ka-chack on her  
back. So Wi-sa-ka-chack he jomp out an' run  
quick' to de top w'ere hees tepee look lak' an islan'

out of de water, an' he dance an' sing an' mek' beeg medicine to keep back de water. But Ke-che-mosh-ka-hun he make medicine more beeg as dat, an' de water she come up, one, two, t'ree, lak everyt'ing. An' w'en de dark she com', de water still creep up.

" Den Wi-sa-ka-chack, heem weary, an' he slep' hard; an' he have gret dream. An' de dream is beeg gobse, ten tam' beeg as any goose lak' he see before, an' w'ite lak' snow; an' dat goose he flap hees wings, an' say—'I am Nih-ka, oh broder; —an' Wi-sa-ka-chack he bow low to de groun', for he never seen no goose lak' as dis befo'! An' Nih-ka, he say—"I am not good, little broder, to mek' de water go down, nor to keel Ke-che-mosh-ka-hun your enemy; but none can fly so fas' lak' me, nor carry message lak' me; so geev me message for your frien' to com' queek an' help you before you drown.' Den in his dream he see Nih-ka dance an' fly roun' in de tepee till it mos' com' down; an' everyt'ing fly up in de air wit' de wind she mak'. An' jus' w'en Wi-sa-ka-chack t'ink de tepee blow away, Nih-ka flop down on de floor in de fire an' scatter de ashes all over, an' disappear.

" Wi-sa-ka-chack he wak' up in de mornin', and he know a sign com' to heem in de night, because everyt'ing turn' upside down in de tepee; an' in de ashes of de fire he fin' a great quill an' he pick it up; an' in de quill he see a small roll of birch bark; an' he hear a great win'; an' Nih-ka she say outside de tepee—





'Write a message, oh broder, dat I may carry it queeck.'  
So he write a message to his frien' Ah-mihk, the beaver,  
to com' an' help him, an' he place it in de quill, an'  
Nih-ka she tak' it an fly away queeck.

"Den Wi-sa-ka-chack he sit down in front of de tepee an' wait, for he know dat Ah-mihk com' queeck lak he can; an de water he still com' up; wan, two, tree, lak dat. But before it com' up to de tepee he hear Ah-mihk com' swimming over de water making slap wit' his tail; an' Ah-mihk say to heem—'Do not be 'fraid little broder.' An' he go quick an' bring mud on hees tail an' sticks in hees paws, an' mek a path across de water so dat Wi-sa-ka-chack he walk right over, wit'out wettin' hees moccasin to a safe place.

"An' so now w'en you see de place w're dat Ah-mihk de beaver live, you see heem build de path across de water to keep hees children mind how dat he wance save Wi-sa-ka-chack. An' every year Ke-che-mosh-ka-hun, wat you call de spring flood, he get angry w'en de snow go an' it mind him how dat Ah-mihk an Wi-sa-ka-chack play heem smart trick, an' he sen' de beeg water to hurt de Cree an' spoil his hunting.

"An' from dat time Nih-ka an' hees children dey show on dere feathers de black an' grey ashes of Wi-sa-ka-chack' fire; only a few place' w'ite on hees cheek an' breast an' onder hees wing' w're de fire not touch. An' all de people all over de worl' know dat story she true, for de Companee she sen' de quills of Nih-ka to all de w'ite man to write hees message wit'."

## THE IMMIGRATION INTO WESTERN CANADA.

Total number of new settlers in 1904, 130,000.

Total for the past five years, 442,000.

Western Canada received in 1903, from Great Britain, 41,792 settlers, and from the United States, 49,473; in 1904 the figures were 50,374 and 45,171 respectively.

The 140,000 Americans who have come to Western Canada during the past five years include 35,000 heads of families; they brought with them cash and settlers' effects totalling \$43,000,000.

## FACTS ABOUT WESTERN CANADA.

There are 1,015 interior elevators representing a capital investment of \$55,000,000, and with a storage capacity of 27,683,000 bushels.

There are ten terminal elevators at the Lake Superior front, with a total capacity of 18,200,000 bushels. All these elevators can be reached by boat of 18-foot draught.

There are 93 three-roller flour mills with a daily capacity of 18,500 barrels.

There are 100,000,000 acres suitable for settlement, but only 3,614,715 acres were in wheat in 1904, yet the return was 55,000,000 bushels.

## FACTS ABOUT BANKS IN WESTERN CANADA.

Canada has 33 chartered banks with 1,000 branches; of the latter 250 are situated west of Lake Superior.

Ten years ago there were only 46 branches west of Lake Superior.

In Winnipeg ten years ago there were 10 banks; to-day there are 21.

Winnipeg is the third largest banking centre in Canada.

The clearings of the banks in Winnipeg in 1900 amounted to \$106,958,792; in 1904 they will reach approximately \$300,000,000.

## FACTS ABOUT FINANCIAL CORPORATIONS IN WESTERN CANADA.

In Manitoba alone, registered loan companies have \$23,000,000 invested.

Life insurance companies have \$7,000,000 invested on mortgage security in Manitoba.

Money on good farm land security earns seven per cent.

Over thirty life insurance companies have offices in Winnipeg; nine leading companies had aggregate premium receipts last year of \$615,961.

The interest income of the same companies was \$24,000.

In 1902 nine insurance companies had invested in Manitoba \$3,955,208. The following year they had \$5,239,701.

In Manitoba the farmers pay back their loans, and the companies invest the money as fast as they get it back.

## FACTS ABOUT WINNIPEG.

Five years ago the rateable assessment of Winnipeg was \$25,000,000; to-day it is \$66,000,000.

Five years ago the population of Winnipeg was 42,000; to-day it is 80,000.

Five years ago the total amount of building done in Winnipeg was \$1,333,468; in 1904, over \$10,000,000 worth of new buildings were put up.

In 1904, 1,300 new houses in Winnipeg were connected with the sewers.

Over 1,661 houses in Winnipeg were fitted with water services in 1904.

There are 83 miles of sewers, 88 miles paved streets, 60 miles of boulevard, 205 miles of sidewalk, and 94 miles of watermains in Winnipeg.

The average school attendance in Winnipeg is nearly 11,000, accommodated in over 20 schools.

# THE GROWTH OF THE MANITOBA FREE PRESS, WINNIPEG.

The Free Press keeps pace in circulation growth with the growth of Winnipeg and Western Canada, the circulation of the Free Press having more than doubled in the short space of three years, as follows:

November, 1901.....	13,963
November, 1902.....	16,627
November, 1903.....	20,845
November, 1904.....	23,267

## CIRCULATION: STATEMENT

Illustrating Growth in Circulation, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904,  
Morning and Evening Editions.

Month	1904	1903	1902	1901
January .....	21,511	16,497	13,907	12,742
February .....	24,958	17,180	18,442	13,227
March .....	25,901	17,372	14,465	13,175
April .....	25,611	17,733	14,874	13,359
May .....	24,995	17,994	14,860	13,316
June .....	25,172	18,485	15,219	13,891
July .....	25,543	19,481	15,716	13,941
August .....	26,983	19,610	16,173	13,883
September .....	28,015	19,504	16,095	14,020
October .....	27,237	20,057	15,787	14,042
November .....	28,267	20,845	16,627	13,963
December .....	.....	21,012	16,802	13,973

	Percentage of Increase		
	1904 over 1903	1903 over 1902	1902 over 1901
January .....	30 2-5	18 1-2	9
February .....	45 1-4	18 1-2	9 9-10
March .....	50	20	9 1-5
April .....	44 2-5	19 1-5	11 1-3
May .....	39	21 1-10	11 1-6
June .....	38 1-5	21 9-10	13 1-3
July .....	31 1-5	23 7-20	12 5-4
August .....	32 2-5	21 1-4	16 1-3
September .....	33 1-3	21 1-5	14 1-10
October .....	34 4-5	27	13 3-5
November .....	35 1-2	28 1-2	16 1-7
December .....	.....	28 9-10	16 2-5

## SOME FACTS IN REGARD TO THE MANITOBA FREE PRESS, WINNIPEG.

THE FREE PRESS is the first Canadian newspaper to adopt the flat rate, the fair rate to the advertiser, and is to-day the only paper in the Dominion possessing a flat rate.

THE FREE PRESS is the only newspaper in the Canadian Northwest that furnishes regularly detailed sworn returns of circulation.

THE FREE PRESS will cancel any advertising contract upon request without notice.

THE FREE PRESS prints the largest paper in Canada and carries more advertising in its columns than any other Canadian newspaper, morning or evening, and publishes the announcements of more individual advertisers than any other daily paper in the Dominion. Of condensed or classified advertisements it carries regularly over three full pages set close in solid agate type.

"Printers' Ink," New York, says: "An examination of Rowell's American Newspaper Directory for 1904 reveals the fact that in Manitoba and the Canadian Northwest the Manitoba Free Press, morning and evening editions, has a higher circulation rating than is accorded to all the other daily papers combined, and the Weekly Free Press has a higher circulation than is accorded to any other weekly."

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